

## **A Study in 1 John for Airdrie Baptist Church**

### **Introduction: A Stout Rope of Four Cords**

Two ideas are vital to understanding the true Gospel:

Mankind is sinful, in need of redemption, and Christ is God, veiled in humanity.

If either of these ideas be denied, a false gospel arises. Today, as in John's day, such heresies abound. The church is to be on guard against teachers who would claim that mankind is ultimately good in his own nature, or that Jesus was only human in His own nature. To hold to either view is to ignore God's revelation concerning the natures of mankind and Christ Jesus.

In the New Testament Letter of First John, we learn that the Apostle John was concerned for the church for just that reason. He was anxious that the churches knew how to spot a fake gospel when they heard it, and he was careful to warn them about what was at stake if they didn't stick to solid doctrine. In his letter John insists that the church pays close attention to what we believe, whom we believe, and how we live as a result.

John's letter reads as a series of instructions to his audience, addressed variously as "dear children" or "dear friends." Each section of thought seems loosely tied to the other sections, with recurring themes running throughout, so on first reading, the letter appears to be a daisy-chain of associated ideas rather than a sustained logical train of thought. But it is far from daisy-chain flimsy. I have found that when reading John's first letter, a good mental image to use is a strongly-wound rope of four different cords: Truth; Fellowship; Family and Victory. As each strand of thought gets repeatedly picked up and gathered into the cords, the rope of the letter takes on a strength of argument that isn't easily frayed or broken. Threads of themes like Love, Discernment, and Joy are woven throughout as John establishes his case.

## **1 John 1:1-4**

### **The First Cord: A Truth that Brings Fellowship and Joy**

**Verses 1-2: What is the Truth John wants to Share? What is his evidence?**

Heard

Seen

Seen

Touched

**Verses 3-4: How does the Truth bring Fellowship? How does Fellowship bring Joy?**

Horizontal Fellowship

Vertical Fellowship

Resulting Joy